

**Draft Summary of the Environmental Work Group Meeting
Oroville Facilities Relicensing (FERC Project No. 2100)
May 22, 2002**

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) hosted a meeting for the Environmental Work Group on May 22, 2002 in Oroville.

A summary of the discussion, decisions made, and action items is provided below. This summary is not intended to be a transcript, analysis of the meeting, or to indicate agreement or disagreement with any of the items summarized, except where expressly stated. The intent is to present a summary for interested parties who could not attend the meeting. The following are attachments to this summary:

Attachment 1	Meeting Agenda
Attachment 2	Meeting Attendees
Attachment 3	Flip Chart Notes
Attachment 4	SP-W2: Contaminant Accumulation in Fish, Sediments, and The Aquatic Food Chain
Attachment 5	SP-T10: Effects of Project Features, Operations and Maintenance on Upland Plan Communities
Attachment 6	SP-F3.2: Evaluation of Project Effects on Non-salmonid Fish In the Feather River Downstream of the Thermalito Diversion Dam
Attachment 7	SP-F2: Evaluation of Project Effects on Fish Diseases
Attachment 8	SP-F9: Evaluation of the Feather River Hatchery Effects on Naturally Spawning Salmonids

Introduction

Attendees were welcomed to the Environmental Work Group meeting. Attendees introduced themselves and their affiliations; several people participated in the meeting at various times via a conference call. The desired outcomes of the meeting were reviewed as listed on the meeting agenda. The meeting agenda and list of meeting attendees are appended to this summary as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively. Meeting flip chart notes are included as Attachment 3.

Action Items – April 24, 2002 Environmental Work Group Meeting

A summary of the April 24, 2002 Environmental Work Group meeting is posted on the relicensing web site. The Facilitator reviewed the status of action items from that meeting as follows:

Action Item #E47	DWR has developed a data management approach that was presented to the Plenary Group. The participants requested that the same presentation be given during the May Environmental Work Group meeting (<i>carry-over action item</i>).
Status:	Bill Mendenhall, who presented the approach to data management for this project at the Plenary Group and Land Use Work Group meetings, has not been scheduled yet to make this presentation to the Environmental Work Group. It may be possible to schedule this presentation for the June 2002 Environmental Work Group meeting.

Update on Plenary Group Actions

Steve Ford, Environmental Resource Area Manager (RAM) with DWR updated the participants on Plenary Group actions taken during their most recent meeting on May 21, 2002, focusing on those issues and decisions related to the Environmental Work Group study plans. The Plenary Group reviewed those Environmental study plans that had either been placed on their consent calendar, were conditionally approved, or were distributed to them for Plenary Group “heartburn” issues. SP-

F2 requires some additional revisions by the author and will be brought back to the Plenary Group for approval at their June meeting. The Plenary Group approved pending Work Group approval SP-F10, SP-F1 and SP-3.2: these study plans are scheduled for the June 2002 Plenary Group consent calendar, after final review and approval by the Environmental Work Group. Steve reported that there remain significant heartburn issues with SP-F9 and he hoped they could resolve them at this Work Group meeting. This study plan will need to be brought back to the Plenary Group for review and approval after resolution at the Work Group level.

Steve reported that issues associated with SP-W2 and SP-T10 have been resolved and the revised versions of these study plans are available as Attachments 4 and 5 to this summary, respectively.

Steve also explained that the study authors and task force participants had identified ways to consolidate SP-F4 into SP-3.1 and SP-F7 into SP-F5. Paul Bratovich with the consulting team suggested that SP-F8 would remain a stand-alone study plan based on changes in these other studies, which will make it relatively simpler. All three of these study plans (SP-3.1, SP-F5, and SP-F8) will be reviewed and discussed at the next Task Force meeting scheduled for June 11, 2002, and then distributed to the Environmental Work Group for review at the June 26, 2002 Environmental Work Group meeting.

Study Plan Review

Several study plans were scheduled for review during the May 2002 meeting. The order of review was adjusted to accommodate key conference call participants' availability.

Study Plan 3.2

The most current version of SP-3.2 was distributed to the Environmental Work Group (see Attachment 6). SP-3.2 was reviewed at the last Task Force meeting with significant changes being made; subsequent minor changes were made since the time of the Task Force meeting. One participant expressed concern that changes are being made outside of the collaborative process, and is in conflict with the protocol of having at least a one-week notice of changes. As a result, the Work Group agreed to review all changes, including the minor edits since the last Task Force meeting, during the review process. With minor revisions, the Work Group approved all changes made to this study plan.

One general concept discussed is that all source data, in addition to published reports, will be evaluated in the data-gathering phase of this study plan. Other changes include softening the commitment of National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to perform the scuba surveys; if needed, divers from California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) may also perform this task. There was substantial discussion on tracking fish via radio/sonic tagging methods; the text was revised to indicate that the concept of using both methods simultaneously would be explored. There was a decision to delete Task 5B because it deals with analyzing project alternatives or Protection, Mitigation, & Enhancement measures (PM&Es); this information will be included in a future study plan dealing with the effects of proposed project alternatives, which will be developed after current impacts are understood. The Plenary Group has approved this study plan so it is ready for implementation.

Study Plan F2

Revisions to SP-F2 were made based primarily on comments provided by Dr. Bill Cox, with CDFG who participated in the review discussion via conference call. The current version of SP-F2 was distributed to the Environmental Work Group (see Attachment 7), which includes final comments provided by Dr. Cox. Based on the discussion, changes will be made to the Study Area section to include rationale for looking at different study sub-areas and the level of data availability for these

areas. Additional changes were made to clarify that this study will only evaluate disease transmission between fish populations, not individual fish. Also, the study plan will reflect that the cohort analysis will be derived from SP-F9. Standard language to be provided by Wayne Dyok with the consulting team, will also be included that clarifies the distinction between information used for the development of PM&Es associated with the new license and information concerning ongoing and future operations under the existing license. One participant requested a phasing schedule that shows the relationships between tasks to make sure that information generated from Phase 1 of this study would be available in time to determine data needs for Phase 2. The study plan authors indicated that the draft report is scheduled to be complete in January 2003, but an interim progress report may be available as early as October 2002. Scheduling will be shown in the Gantt chart currently under revision. The Work Group agreed that after all of the text changes to this study plan agreed to in this meeting have been made, SP-F2 would return to the Plenary Group for final review/approval and if no changes are made or requested at that time, this study plan would be ready for implementation.

Cumulative Approach/ESA Task Force Update

The Cumulative Approach/ESA Task Force met on May 17, 2002. Significant progress has been made to develop a combined Cumulative Impact and ESA Approach document that provides guidance to the individual work groups that need to evaluate cumulative or ESA issues relative to their specific resource area. The Task Force provided substantial comments that have been incorporated into the consolidated guidance document, including moving all legal citations into an appendix. The most current version of the guidance document has been distributed to all DWR RAMs for review and distribution to their respective work groups for discussion and comment. Once the work group comments are incorporated, this study plan will return to the Cumulative Approach/ESA Task Force to be finalized.

Study Plan Review (continued)

Study Plan F-9

The discussion on SP-F9 initially focused on the potential to split this study into two components based on tasks that could be agreed on and other tasks yet to be resolved. The Environmental Work Group decided that it would be favorable to project schedule to split this study into two components, referred to as SP-F9A and SP-F9B, which are intended to represent the distinction between those items that can be agreed to and initiated (SP-F9A) and a future study that would contain various sub-tasks representing technical areas that warrant detailed evaluation (SP-F9B). Because SP-F9B has not yet been developed, there was consensus that if this route is taken, SP-F9A needs to include a statement that SP-F9B will occur and provide the parameters under which it would occur.

The remaining discussion focused on what issues/tasks should be included under SP-F9A and/or SP-F9B. Although closely related, SP-9A and SP-9B are not directly dependent on one another; in other words, the two studies could proceed independently of each other. After much discussion, representatives from the NMFS agreed to provide DWR an outline, in writing, as to what tasks they would like to see included in SP-F9B, based on their need for fishery-related information to prepare a well-informed Biological Opinion (BO) for the project. There was agreement that SP-9A would include a literature search covering a wide range of issues association with fish hatcheries in general, and specifically the Feather River Hatchery, including its history and goals. DWR estimated that a "draft/initial" report for the literature tasks contained in SP-F9A could be completed in approximately 2 months. However, there was not consensus on whether analytical tasks included in SP-9A were appropriate whether SP-9A should be limited to strictly a literature review. There was extensive debate between Work Group participants on this issue and how SP-F9A and SP-F9B should be structured. No resolution was made on this issue at the Environmental Work

Group meeting. Therefore, SP-F9 is not ready for Plenary Group review. The proposed approach agreed to by the Work Group is for DWR and NMFS representatives to meet in the next two weeks to develop a proposed structure for these study plans and subsequently bring this issue back to the Fisheries Task Force on June 11, 2002 and to the Environmental Work Group at its June 26, 2002 meeting.

Other issues associated with SP-F9 that will be discussed include the definition of late fall chinook salmon, the different salmonid species to be analyzed (e.g., chinook salmon, coho salmon), the status/role of the hatchery review team, recent agency recommendations to release all hatchery fish in the Feather River; and the inclusion of Sacramento River and San Joaquin River tributaries in the study area.

Next Steps / Meetings

The Environmental Work Group agreed on the following meeting dates/times:

The Environmental Work Group

Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2002
Time: 9:30am – 3:30pm
Location: Kelly Ridge Meeting Room

The Cumulative Approach/ESA Task Force

Date: Friday, May 31, 2002
Time: 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Location: TBD

The Fisheries Task Force

Date: Tuesday, June 11, 2002
Time: 9:30am – 3:30pm
Location: Oroville Field Division

Action Items

The following list of action items identified by the Environmental Work Group includes a description of the action, the participant responsible for the action, and item status.

Action Item #E47: Present the data management approach associated with this project to the Environmental Work Group (*carry-over action item*).

Responsible: DWR
Due Date: Once all study plans are completed

Action Item #E48: Hold meeting to discuss proposed approach for SP-F9A and SP-F9B.

Responsible: DWR / NMFS
Due Date: Before June 11 Fisheries Task Force meeting